

## **MEETING RECORD**

**NAME OF GROUP:** Urban Design Committee

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, June 7, 2006, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

### **MEMBERS AND OTHERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Members:	Mike Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Thomas Saddler, Gordon Scholz and Scott Sullivan. (Kim Todd and Mary Anne Wells absent.)
Others:	Ken Hake (Security Federal); Dan Dunne (Site Acquisition Consultants); Ernie Castillo and Jeff Cole (Urban Development); Ed Zimmer, David Gaspers and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Regular Urban Design Committee Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

### **Approval of meeting notes of May 3, 2006**

Eckert moved approval of the May 3, 2006 minutes, seconded by Kissel. Motion carried 5-0. Eckert, Kissel, Saddler, Scholz and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Todd and Wells absent.

### **Public art project: 12<sup>th</sup> Street Skywalk (Jeff Cole)**

Jeff Cole stated that they received a request from the Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) for a donation of art to the City's public art collection. This is for treatment of the skywalk between N and O Streets on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, which is the City's art corridor. This area was identified for improvement in the arts corridor master plan. Last year, DLA did a national call for artists to submit their ideas for treatments to the skywalk. They received 63 proposals from artists all over the country. They went through a rigorous selection process and selected a local artist, Larry Roots, as the proposal to move forward for consideration. Roots is working in conjunction with the Lincoln Action Program. He is proposing a photo mural of a continuous brick wall of photos taken of persons from alleys in Lincoln. The persons are 14-15 feet tall. He would use technology similar to what is used on the StarTran buses, where you can see out, but not in. There are ten figures on each side of the mural. The persons portrayed in the piece are downtown residents or Lincoln Action Program clientele. Ken Hake was head of the selection committee and will lead the fundraising for DLA. This will be privately funded with an estimated budget of \$65,000-\$70,000. The project was kicked off with a \$15,000 grant from the Lincoln Arts Council. They would like to have the piece in place by August or September. A mock-up of the piece was also presented.

Eckert asked if there is a limited duration of the piece. Cole stated that it should have at least a ten year life span. He further noted that they will ask DLA to set aside funding to allow for removal of the piece. Hake stated that it will be the responsibility of DLA or the City to decide when the piece should come down.

Cole stated that a master plan was done on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and this skywalk was identified as a detriment to the corridor. There were several entries, but they chose this one because it was a treatment that de-emphasized the structure, which was their goal. Hake added that this piece also made a significant statement to the diversity of Lincoln today.

Kissel stated that she likes the idea, and it seems like a real urban solution and does not seem out of context for Lincoln.

Eckert stated that something about the piece bothers him, and he believes it is the scale. It seems a little overpowering for him. He asked if other departments have seen the plan in terms of potential traffic distractions. Cole noted that the Police Department did not have any concerns with the piece. Eckert also noted that it is important to remember this is privately funded.

Zimmer suggested identifying a date in the future for review of the “deaccessioning” the piece, and that maybe Urban Design Committee should have an identified role in that process, as an on-going entity.

Scholz expressed his apprehension of the piece and noted a concern with the imagery being so literal and so real. He would prefer it to be more abstract. One criticism is that it could be more transparent. The thing that bothers him most is the depiction of a brick wall expressed so literally as an opaque wall. He feels that the skywalk should still read as a skywalk. He is concerned with the gracefulness of how it ties in with the other buildings. He feels that the visual heaviness of the brick wall elevated in air is concerning.

Sullivan stated that he likes the idea and the theme, but he would like to see it on a more populated alley in downtown. He also has a concern with the floating brick and the architectural integrity of a brick wall suspended in air. He would also like to see it play off the transparency of the skywalk. He feels like we are trying to hide something that we cannot hide.

Kissel stated that she feels the piece reads as a work of art, and it is not intended to be a compatible contextual piece of architecture.

Eckert stated that he likes the intent of the diversity of people from our community, but he would like to see it a little less literal.

Zimmer questioned if the artist would be willing to explore the concept of not raising an alley to the second floor level, but instead populating the skywalk. This would allow for visibility through the skywalk. Hake commented that his initial reaction is this would lose the artistic nature of the piece. He also noted that Lincoln has a lot of brick, not only in alleys but on second floor buildings as well.

Zimmer noted that when the City has an offer of a public art piece, the process is to get the advice of the Urban Design Committee, then forward it to City Council. Cole noted that the project will go to City Council on July 10. Zimmer stated that he will draft a statement noting the range of opinions of the Committee. He further suggested bringing this item back to the Committee at the next meeting. Hake also suggested that Zimmer could contact the artist and convey the comments of the Committee members. Zimmer stated that the Committee is aware of not redesigning pieces, but the artist can respond to the comments. Zimmer also noted that it may be beneficial to have the artist at the next meeting.

Saddler stated that it is important to do what is good for the community as a whole.

Hake thanked the Committee for their truthful and thoughtful opinions.

**Wireless communication antennae: Van Dorn Park, Arnold Heights, Pioneers Park (Cingular)**

Dan Dunne stated that they are proposing to add an additional 40 feet to the existing tower in Van Dorn Park which would make it 190 feet in height. He noted that the tower will be flush mounted.

Zimmer noted that the City's policy is that the cell tower companies build the towers for the City. Dunne noted that they will pay the City for rent on the tower.

Zimmer noted that part of the advantage of this site is that this is adjacent to an industrial area, and it is not an uncluttered park skyline.

Sullivan stated that he previously voted for approval of this antennae because he likes the site, but he does not like the additional height.

Kissel moved approval of the project with a flush mounted system, seconded by Eckert. Motion carried 4-1. Eckert, Kissel, Saddler and Scholz voting 'yes'; Sullivan voting 'no'; Todd and Wells absent.

Zimmer stated that they would like to add 15 feet to the Pioneers Park antennae for a total of approximately 105 feet. The Committee generally did not have any concerns with the additional 15 feet. Sullivan noted that the tower is quite visible from the Park golf course.

**Thunderstone building, West O redevelopment project (Ernie Castillo, Urban Development Dept.)**

At the request of the developer, this item will be postponed until the next meeting.

**Misc.**

Zimmer noted that he is working with Urban Development and the South Street Business and Civic Association, which is an association of businesses and neighborhood groups near South Street. They are working on a redevelopment plan and design principles which will be brought forward in the future.

The meeting concluded at 4:23 p.m.

*\*\*Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee. \*\**